

Frank B. Ford  
Greene Street Artists' Building, apt 1  
5225 Greene Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19144-2927  
telephone (215) 848-7385  
email: vegt@netaxs.com

Hamburger

A play in two acts

by Frank B. Ford

HAMBURGER

DIANE, around thirty-five, a ditzy housewife enamored of adult education

MAC, around forty-five, a formerly ebullient businessman, now gripped by a disease that turns men to stone

COOK, 30, and mostly over-demonstrative in word and action

WAITER, a teen who doesn't want to be there, especially in the cornball uniform of the day.

PROFESSOR, 30, half an ardent revolutionary, half a fat fraud. A dangerous combination

PORKPIE, a teen--wears a porkpie hat. Professor's follower and intimate.

HUNTER, 40, a violent stereotype

POLICEMAN, 25, workaday, believes in routine and its relationship to order.

A very large hamburger, probably made of some kind of plastic. A rusty pipe sticks up through the middle of the bun. There is a light inside the hamburger. The whole shabby works is the central decoration of a pseudo-Pennsylvania Dutch drive-in restaurant.) Somewhere in the vicinity is a transparent cube or window frame. Lights come up on the staring COOK

in this "kitchen."

Enter WAITER. He wears a patchy beard made of steel wool, and carries a walkie-talkie with his order pad clipped to the back. He plays with switch which rat-tat-tats through a loudspeaker. Cook remains blank for now--he alternates between this state and acute demonstration.

DIANE enters with MAC, she fluttery while banging along with clogs, he extraordinarily stiff.

Diane  
It said pull right in here. A sign.

Mac  
Sign? Sign?

Waiter  
That's right Ma'am, but it aint required..

Diane  
Well that's what it said!

Waiter  
Vill you eat?

Diane  
Fine for you to say.

Waiter  
Kissing vears out but our cooking--

Diane

Honestly!

Waiter

Throw Mama over the fence--

Mac

No!

Diane

I thought some Pennsylvania thing. An inspection. Pull  
right in--

Waiter

To Dutch Wonderburger!

Diane

And we laughed at my Father!

Waiter

Ma'am?

Diane

How could I say it clearer?

Waiter

Throw Mama over the fence a bale of hay.

Diane

That's so cruel! Why do people always keep saying such things?  
It's like the car: everything on it buzzes and they don't tell  
you why. You have to find out for yourself.

Mac

Nice machine.

Diane

I don't think so. Nobody tells you anything anymore.

Mac

Nice machine!

Diane

Well Mac knows machines but they should tell you something. IL makes you crazy turning everything off till the stupid buzzing stops.

Waiter

Process of elimination.

Diane

Please don't say any more of those country things. They're disgusting!

Mac

(gagging sound)

Waiter

I take order for you folks? It's two for one.

Diane

What's that?

Waiter

What you get once you get twice.

Diane

That'll be the day--when you get anything at all. My father said  
all this was coming.

Mac

Nice machine.

Diane

He should be in a hospital but I thought...a Holiday Inn?

Waiter

Nice one not far but our Toofer-one's more famous.

Diane

Then give us one. Or two.

(WAITER flips switch and we get screeching feedback. MAC looks like a twitchy swimmer trying to drain an ear; COOK pretends to be shot, sinking slowly as he flashes his spatula.)

Diane

Everything is getting so silly.

(MAC lurches to hamburger, sits on springy chair beside it, examines it in the manner of a doctor at a body, thumping with a finger.

WAITER gives order through walkie-talkie, COOK popping up to react with his own orgiastic ritual...)

Waiter

It's a toofer-one! Wonder! Whirl! Wiggle!

Diane

What kind of food is that?

Waiter

Wonder burgers! Wonder fries! Wonder shakes! Wuh wuh wuh!

Diane

Nothing's that good.

Cook

(through loudspeaker) Wonder-fulllllllll! (when) I get done!

Diane

Well what's the matter with him?

Waiter

Can't I get you folks nothing else?

Mac

(peering into hamburger) Half a horse!

Waiter

Sir?

Diane

Doesn't anybody understand anything anymore?

Waiter

No Ma'am.

Diane

The motor! Half a horse power! Must be in there for something.

Mac

Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmm. (making a stiff stirring motion with his whole body)



Diane

You can't fool Mac on that! It's his business!

Waiter

Yes Ma'am. No. Uh...cooking vears out but kissing don't!

Diane

That's backwards!

Waiter

Sorry about dat. Vell I get too soon old and too late  
schmarttttttt!

Diane

That's six of one and half a dozen of the other.

Mac

(leaping up and stirring with his body, obscenely) Mmmmmmm!

Mmmmm!

Waiter

Shouldn't do dat. People get wrong idea.

Diane

Hmpf! When they get the right one write a letter to China.  
A long one full of lies. Jesus knows what's going on  
and don't think he doesn't.

Waiter

Lots of churches after your meal.

Diane

Not today but I voted for Nixon. All I could do.

Mac

Tuh! Tuh! Tuh!

Diane

He means it used to turn, the hamburger.

Waiter

I don't know Ma'am. They had the water shooting out of it last week but I never did see it turn.

Diane

Don't try to fool Mac. People are in for a surprise around here.

Waiter

It turned! Don't that beat all?

Diane

I don't know.

(MAC returns to seat and pretends to spit water upwards.)

Diane

We know, Honey. He was fine yesterday, but then he got all stiff.

Waiter

Lots of stuff going around.

Diane

We'll all be wearing gas masks. Won't that be a fine life?

Waiter

Vell you excuse me I vait on these other people. (exits)

Diane

(shouts) There's nobody else here! Lie about the little things and then you'll be stealing cars.

(MAC has been tapping the hamburger but now sits bolt upright.)

Diane

That's it Mac, you just relax. (Now putting her arm around him) All work and no play with your stupid partner Curt running home all the time trying, to catch Olla screwing in the new kitchen and her always pretending to kill herself. Honestly! What a lemon! And if she's not having a breakdown or tackling some repairman, well then there she is with Malcolm and smoking marijuana in the twenty-five thousand dollar kitchen. Stainless steel everywhere but you can't get rid of that marijuana stink. And Spick and Span can brag all they want to.

Mac

Stink? Span? Spack? (puts ear to hamburger)

Diane

That partner of yours! He can cat all the yogurt and jogging he wants, he's still a slob. You can't shine shit my father said and didn't even know him. (MAC shakes his head and throws back an arm to tell her she disturbs his concentration.)

All right Honey. But you're everything to that company. Don't forget it. (musing) That toll collector now...he was a handsome man. Oh I know he was a little nasty at first with his (imitation bass) "Well that's a new record from the Valley Forge exchange!" I didn't tell him but (visionary) I like to go a hundred. A hundred's all ziggle-y blurs. Like green water. Like (puzzled) long green water. And I watched you, Honey. It all rannnnnnn across your eyes all green and pretty. (MAC turns to her and blankly remembers something of it.)

Well he let me go when he stuck his head in and saw you and I told him we were going to a hospital or a Holiday Inn. (She kisses him.)

Mac

Hate!

Diane

Oh you're just jealous cause I told you about marrying him on TV before I saw him. That's just a daydream cause I see people before I meet them lots of times. You know that. It means nothing at all.

(giggles) You were the preacher and Fatso Curt the best man. As if I'd ever pick him! And Olla and Malcolm coking it up in the middle of all the flowers. They took Malcolm clean out of Rutgers and sent him to Trenton State but I bet they got drugs there too.

Mac

Hundred? Fast kill!

Diane

God what's the difference what gets you. Live for today! (swinging binoculars out, sighting through them.) Oh look how nice it is here. In the car you never get a good look. FAMOUS MURDER ENACTED DAILY. If we got time. LIL-ALS CERAMICS FEATURING WORLD'S LARGEST ASHTRAY.

And here's one hard to beat: decoupage coffin. But it's just a kit. We can see the murder later if you really want to but they're better on TV.

Mac

Kih kih kih kih kih--! (Kill)

Diane

Now don't get mad: at the English language. We can't help that. All we can do is make it up as we go along. The way we do everything. What else can you do? You say something to me and I make up what you said. Imagination, Mac! Like marrying the toll collector. What else is there?

Mac

Kill! (He's crawling on hamburger.)

Diane

Oooooooooo! Great big man with a dirty beard and a pretzel and he's blessing us like the pope. PRETZELTERIA--that's cute. But ... it's ... (staggering backwards and letting binoculars fall) all coming at you! All tumbling down on you. The wires! Sick at your stomach. (She hears Mac's clambering) Oh Mac! (blinking her eyes) You looked so nice and now you're going to get all dirty. (He's peering inside as he crawls, and now he grips the rusty pipe as she starts crawling after him, clogs and binoculars bumping.) (with WAITER to whom they obviously have given an order)

Enter PROFESSOR and PORKPIE, staring at them all the while they walk to a table. PROFESSOR wears Che Guevara sweatshirt with random peace signs; PORKPIE a porkpie hat.

Diane

It's really not our hamburger. (When she gets near him he swings his free arm back viciously.)  
It's Diane! Your Di!

Mac

Die!

Diane

You stop or Mommy'll hit back!

Mac

(swinging arm forward to grasp pipe with both hands)  
Whole horse! Whole horse!

Diane

Did I say it wasn't? I'm on your side. (now peering in)  
Oh yeah. Boy that's an old one all right! They had that one before electricity.

(Suddenly mollified, he lets go and slides down and into her. They bump off the hamburger together. Then PROFESSOR and PORKPIE jump upon the hamburger and Imitate DIANE and MAC, finally playing a king of the mountain in which they slap at each other and shriek and giggle. MAC claps his hands over his ears. WAITER exits, shaking his head.)

Diane (cont)

Aren't they silly Mac? (has to shout to be heard) Hippies. They don't want to work.

(Whenever they can PROFESSOR and PORKPIE make faces at DIANE and MAC but she ignores them by taking up the binoculars again and looking in another direction.)

Another FISHFACE opening here. It's a statue of a fish, Mac. Laminated wood sculpture! Didn't I tell you that my Art Around You course would do some good? (Takes binoculars from eyes, jiggles them.)

Mac

Crap!

Diane

I'm in Seeing when we get back but only because Yoga is closed. Lance teaches Seeing and that's his only name. Can you beat it?

Mac

Fishface?

Diane

Not you, Silly.

Mac

Lance?

Professor

No, Lance is a Faggot.

Porkpie

Maybe he's a faggot fishface.

Professor

Or a fishface faggot with one name.

Porkpie

Don't call the kettle black.

Mac

Seeing?

Professor

That sonabitch's out of synch.

Diane

(flustered) Emily Post!

Porkpie

Fuck her.

Professor

But by the book.

Diane

I talking about politeness, and I don't remember inviting you two into my life.

Professor

I haven't checked the mail.

Porkpie

Faggot fuckin fishface with one name and putting out shit all the ladies eat up! I love it! Lance!

Professor

You're a child. Grow up and you don't have to beat everything to death.

Porkpie

It hasn't died yet. Let you know when it does. (They slip off hamburger the same way MAC and Diane did.)

Professor

How about Wily Post?

Porkpie

He's a second banana.

Professor

She'll grab what she can get. (PROFESSOR AND PORKPIE go back to their table, PROF panting.)

Mac

Wily Post? Wily Post? Wily Post?

Professor (re MAC)

If that sonofabitch didn't exist we'd have to invent him.

Diane

Well what's so hot about you?

Professor

Go kiss the FISHFACE sign! French!

Diane

You're disgraces.

Professor



In all probability but may I ask you a question?

Diane

No!

Professor

What did it do for you two? For us it was just a ride on a slippery hamburger. No soul experience, and we didn't make love to it. (PORKPIE leaps up and does a couple of grinds, unzips fly.)

Porkpie

(bumping each time) Hump a hamburger! Fuck a fishface! Piss on a pizza.

Diane

Wouldn't your mother be proud?

Porkpie

You're my mother. You gave me away and I was raised in the fast food jungle.

Diane

Who can understand hippies?

(PORKPIE breaks into an arm-flapping dance, shrieking like a jungle bird. PROFESSOR gets frustrated trying to restrain him, finally gets PORKPIE'S shirttail and is pulled around a bit until he can do the pulling.

Professor

I...try to keep him off the grass but he won't listen. Nobody listens to me. I don't listen to me.

(MAC'S head falls to the -table and DIANE wipes around it with a napkin.)

Mac

Fairies!

Professor

(panting and laughing) As I was saying before your your your ballet of Middle America, only way to appreciate vomit-inducing art is to crawl over it, a la Iron Mac and the Duchess there.

Diane

How did you know his name?

Professor

Nothing. What he is. He has his instincts; I have mine. He simulates sex with hamburgers.

Porkpie

Wish you'd try it yourself. I'm still sore.

Professor

We have to pay for what we get.

Porkpie

Too much. It's my turn.

Professor

When someone is fucking and someone is getting fucked, why both are fucking. Logic.

Porkpie (grabbing crotch)

I got your logic right here.

Professor

(Zipping PORKPIE'S fly) Please don't be crude! True Americans are present.

Porkpie

My ass is red, my heart is white, my prick is blue.

Professor

Odd form of the past tense.

Diane

Don't think you're fooling anybody.

Professor

In which category?

Diane

You're old enough to be his father.

Professor

I'm his mother. The dean is his father. But listen, Duchess, the sex gets Mac too shaky. Why not come back to the college with me and let me seal you two in plastic. Better yet I'll bring the plastic here and seal you in with your beloved hamburger.

Mac

S s s s s s seal?

Professor

He's improving.

Porkpie

(To MAC) Bark, Cock!

Professor

I'll even throw in some ooopy-dooopy itchy kitchy Pennsylvania Dutch souvenirs. Speaking of which-- (WAITER enters with Diane'S AND MAC'S ORDER.)

Waiter

(screaming) Wow wow wow wow wow wow wow! Wonder! Whirl!  
Wiggle! W-W-W-W-w-W-W-W-W-w-W-

Professor

(louder) So eat a little and die in tourist heaven! Right, Iron  
Mac? Right Duchess? Right Vay-torrerrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr?

Waiter

Right Sir, but we should keep a little bit quiet. (plays with  
butterfly switch on walkie talkie. Feedback!)

Cook

That's quiet enough.

Waiter

(confiding) They're from the college.

Cook

For sure. For sur-ur-ure.

Diane

Then they should teach them to know better.

Porkpie

(disturbed) We're knowing the best we can! Jesus Christ!

Professor

You really upset?

Porkpie

Fuckin A. Everybody's trying to cut your fuckin heart out.

Professor

Hack, more like. Cause they're fuckin hacks, like Mac shoving  
in the carbohydrates for hate energy.

Porkpie

(terrorized) Please don't hurt me Mac!

Professor

Shush.

Diane

I think we should eat in the car.

Professor

Stick around Dutchess. We're going to unofficially open the Fishface. At least I think so. It's not up to me. It has nothing to do with me, in fact. I'm ready in case. They also serve who only stand and wait. Like Mac.

Porkpie

He he he he should drop dead!

Professor

Great! Then they'll pound him into the ground.

Diane

(challenging) That Fishface is a laminated wood sculpture. We dealt with them in our Art Around You course.

Professor

Well lick my ceramic daisy, and here I thought you were an ordinary idiot.

Diane

And who do you think you are?

Professor

The genius of today's happening.

Diane

Huh! Today happens no matter what you do. What else can it do?  
It's what it does. People fuss about all the wrong things.

(MAC is rising to advance towards PROFESSOR over the hamburger.)

Porkpie

Go beat up a girl you knotted turd with peanuts.

Professor

The Baudelaire of the boondocks.

Diane

Yuk! (pulling MAC back by the belt)

Professor

Hoh hoh hoh, Iron Mac was cranking up and now he's cranking  
down. (spits on hamburger, looks upward) Really clouding up.  
Hope it doesn't rain on our parade. It really stinks too! So  
wait a little, Iron Mac, and you can take home a cube of air to  
poison  
the dog.

(PORKPIE lifts up his hat with both hands and sticks out his  
tongue.)

Diane

You should learn some manners. we came here by mistake. It's  
not fair.

(MAC'S elbow slips off table and DIANE is hard pressed to get it  
back.)

Professor

Look at that Arthur? Do you see that?

Porkpie

Yup. Nope. Maybe.

Mac

Seeing? Fuck!

Professor

The Silent Majority in peace and war. Let's all piss in the world's largest ashtray so the niggers can swim.

Porkpie

(prodding Prof's belly) Big deal! Big deal! Anyways this anthro and pology is your bag.

Professor

(animated) It's everybody's bag, Arthur or there won't be a bag. You want the whole world to end up like Mac? Laxative stock'll skyrocket.

Porkpie

No shit! (does gleeful, eccentric dance)

Professor

Now listen. I used to laugh at fools too, tolerate them (a little like I tolerate you.

Porkpie

Got me at wrong end.

Professor

(screaming at MAC) But now I know they have to go! (MAC slams the table with a fist; PROFESSOR slams his table with both fists)

Cook

Hey, like don't destroy the environment.

Professor

Iron Mac doesn't want to hear but I'll make you hear, Iron Mac! Make you! Pooof pooof poo-oo-ooof! that's the way you're going to go. Pooof and it's all over. I mean Arthur, baby, they're out of it! Let's fucking vaporize them and start all over.

Diane

You're you're you're the one out of it. Because of the likes of you Malcolm had to leave Rutgers and Olla is half crazy and Curt gets fatter and lazier irregardless of the yogurt.

Professor

Fuck the yogurt.

Porkpie

Only thing we haven't tried.

Diane

You ought to be arrested.

Porkpie

I'll testify.

Professor

Corrupting the marbles of a moron.

Diane

That's right! That's what they call it all right. It's in the newspaper!

Professor

I'd give my whole life to explain the revolution to you two too solid citizens. You brought it about by worrying about the car too much and crawling over vomit-inducing art. In fact you're vomit-inducing art yourself. The fucked folk!



Porkpie

Lucky them!

Diane

My husband is sick! Even you can see that.

Professor

Ugh!

Porkpie

Everybody's sick but where's the excuse forms? Huh?  
(to PROF) You're saying bad things about me.

Professor

Never. You're hope!

Porkpie

Tolerating Arthur? Wouldn't call it that exactly. Don't know  
what the dean'd call it.

Professor

Not another threat of blackmail!

Diane

I'd report it! I'd report it immediately!  
(PROF gives her the finger.) I wouldn't wait a minute.

Professor

Get your nose bobbed, Duchess. This is the bush league not  
prime time, bu-uuuuut, history is going to happen--if one  
person chooses. Up to that one person. With the tube one person  
can do history. TV is one transcendental popcorn fart.

Porkpie

Shit, professor, nothing ever happens but talk.

Professor

This ... just ... might ... be ... rare.

Porkpie

(mutters) My only blackmail (would be to) go away.

Diane

The sooner--

Professor

Then go away or don't go away. it's the same. Play. It's all I do. All I do is play. And it's better than truly truly screen romances, right. Duchess?

(MAC has french fries sticking from his mouth; he spits them out.)

Mac

Play? Play! Play? Play! Play? Play!

Porkpie

He's AC DC.

Mac

(as if trying to recall; moving his hands dreamily to keep Diane's away)

Direct drive. Al-ter-nating. Cu-cu-rent.

Diane

That's it Honey. You're the expert. It's me, your Di.

Mac

Diiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii?

Diane

You got it, smarty pants!

Porkpie

(pout) Tell ... dean.

Professor

Again and again and again and again. You're so boringly corrupt you reach a form of beauty--like Iron Mac and the Dutchess and their beloved hamburger. Like the beloved hamburger of America herself! From the mighty mountains in her heartland to the gray lettuce at her shores.

Porkpie

Forgot the whatchacallit: fuckin endless plains, of grain or some waving shit, anyway.

(PORKPIE slides to the floor and PROF and he toss a napkin dispenser back and forth.)

Professor

Ah we lived to soon. In the near future each person will have the bomb.

Porkpie

I been saving.

Professor

We could vaporize the whole shitpile.

Porkpie

I start with you.

Professor

My apologies. Mes apologeeeeeeez, mon ami. I have no right to take out on you--

Porkpie

Shhhh. They don't have to hear everything. It just encourages

them.

Professor

Oh they hear and don't hear and it's all the same to them.  
Typical Americans I've been telling you!

Porkpie

They don't play I suppose.

Professor

No, they work. Until they go crazy like Iron Mac, or hysterical  
in menopause like the Duchess. Then they become tourists.

Mac

Play? No! No play no play!

Professor

(flashing okay sign) He's sustaining better, Dutchess.

(She's pleased but Mac is suddenly up with such force that  
PORKPIE leaps up too.)

Cook

Cool it down down dere! Dis here is happiness place. Cooking  
vears out but kiss--

Diane

You got it backwards too. My father said everybody'll get it  
all backwards someday, and then we'll all be dead!

Porkpie

How come we're not?

Professor

The severely logical is cosmically stupid. You should join our  
faculty, Dutchess.

Diane

No thanks! (back of MAC with her arms around him.) Now Honey-Bunny--

Professor

Let him go. He'll just rigidify and we can screw him into the hamburger. (MAC is dragging her)

Diane

I should let him go. You two wouldn't have the chance of a snowshovel in hell!

Professor

He needs a malaprop like you to hold him up.

(HUNTER enters wearing red coat and carrying rifle. MAC is frightened, makes a beeline to his chair.)

(southern) Right wing iron! Right wing iron! Hide away in the fuckin houses, they're out! They're out!

Hunter

Keep a cool stool Fatso.

(MAC has fallen over his chair and is now almost dancing with Diane as she tries to right it.)

Porkpie

Hey watch that kind of dancing. Catholics around.

Professor

Control guns and only criminals'll have them!

Hunter

Smarter than you look.

Professor

But who said it first? The Natural Ratfood Association?

Porkpie

Wish I said that.

Professor

Andddddddd Lee Harvey Oswald, Dame May Whitty, Sacco and the other ghinny, the electrical Rosenbergs.

Hunter

(shaking head) Whatever you say.

Porkpie

I did say that, Professor.

Professor

And Abe Lincoln borrowed a fuckin candle just so he could read it by the light of a book and he walked seventy two miles to return it. And you're the end result! You!

(Hunter is sitting down, resting rifle on spare chair and MAC shakes his fist at him.

Hunter

Whatsamatter with him now?

Diane

Don't pay no attention. Don't pay no attention to him. He's sick.

Hunter

Whole bunch, looks like.

Professor

Who?

Porkpie

Who?

Professor

You! Who!

Porkpie

Yoohoo yoohoo yoohoo!

Professor

Hoo you, Dutchess and Iron Mac and Hunter! The great middle class with a gun stuck up their ass!

Porkpie

Barrel out their mouth. Pull the trigger and kill a nigger. Fart and waste a Spick.

(HUNTER shakes his head and PROFESSOR imitates him furiously. HUNTER catches up and MAC joins in. During this short competition, COOK nods his head rapidly as if to counteract. When competition suddenly stops, PORKPIE simulates masturbation.)

Diane

(to all) If you could have babies you'd grow up.

Porkpie

Not while I'm coming. (makes bigger gestures and pants under HUNTER'S speech)

Hunter

Fuckin animals got more dignity.

Diane

Amen. We we we came in here--it was actually a mistake!

Professor

Fate aint ever no mistake.

Hunter

He's fuckin professor and he's fuckin illiterate! It's what it's fuckin come to, excuse me Ma'am.

Diane

Not at all. You would have loved my father: He saw it all coming. Every bit. The hippies won't work and they know everything. An they won't listen to nobody.

Hunter

They know shit's what they know.

Professor

May I speak? May I have the floor.

Hunter

Might come up to meet you awful fuckin fast, you don't watch it.

Professor

(Mounting a chair--or preferably the hamburger) Threats, Sir, th-reats are the Florida State League. I'm speaking Sir of the Yankees, class and cream of big league ball. Yankees then, true Yankees, M-16 Yankees that is...why they kill babies correctly and with enough glitziiness for even Broadway.

(PORKPIE performs eccentric soft-shoe, toetapping the hamburger periodically, often pretending to also, to HUNTER's and MAC'S mounting irritation.)

Diane

It's easy to blame everybody else for everything.

Hunter



You make me want to take a bath!

Professor

Then I have done some good.

Hunter

(reaching for gun but just sort of jiggles the barrel) I'd like to splash your fuckin ugly ass all over that fuckin ugly hamburger.

Professor

Oh you're just saying that. How you show love.

Mac

Love! Shit! shitlove!

Diane

Mac!

Professor

The anal-banal--or how the middle class views romance.

Hunter

I want to puke.

Porkpie

Who's stopping you? Live for today.

Diane

That's the fist one I agreed with. (Porkpie doffs hat and bows.

As WAITER enters, goes to HUNTER)

Waiter

Vill you eat?

Professor

For the nonce Iron Mac is quiet but soon he'll join this hunter and kill us all for truth and beauty, right wing style-- religious sincerity and armpits with all their connotations, as visibly represented by the egregious hamburger revolving fountain: aesthetic embodiment of American Capitalism. And it doesn't work. Beautiful!

And Iron Mac doesn't work either, except to shake all over every seven minutes. He's programmed by the Duchess.(MAC flicks his head around trying to understand. PORKPIE shoves at PROF'S chair --or tries to push him off hamburger.)

Remember the Maine! Remember Pearl Harbor! Remember the Fishface!

Porkpie

How 'bout Lizzie Borden? She was young, so they tried to fuck her for cutting up.

(WAITER has gotten HUNTER'S order and exits talking into walkie-talkie.)

Waiter

Coke! (message is garbled)

Hunter

I'd blow your hairy fuckin head off if ammo didn't cost money.

Professor

(hopping down and approaching him, all the while pulling out his wallet) How much?

Hunter

Where's the fuckin manager? I want the fuckin manager.

Professor

Good stuff now. How much is the good stuff?

(WAITER enters with tray of food, a huge order, comes in between PROFESSOR and HUNTER, pushes PROF back with tray.)

Waiter

So don't get hex-cited in this here heat. So eat.  
(PROFESSOR AND PORKPIE voraciously attack food)

Waiter

Can't eat it all. We got whole bunch left in dere.

Hunter

Oink oink.

Professor

Right! Right! I eat like a pig because of the pain, of the pain! Of the pain! The pain!

Porkpie

That there's the whatchacallit? Pain he's talking about.

Professor

Oh my God! In this place. At this time. The asshole of the universe.

Diane

You're just always bragging about yourself is all you're always doing.

Professor

Oh my God God God God God the unbearable pain of life, and you did this to me, Mac. You you you you you! Cretinous hunter too!

Hunter

... fuckin manager? Gonna let assholes take over or something?

Porkpie

Come on off it! Leave the poor guy alone. There's something wrong with him.

Professor

Hmpf! Precisely what I've been saying, brilliant one.

Porkpie

Oh you been saying a lot of things all mixed up.

Professor

(strawberry milkshake around his mouth) Yes and no ... but ... I ... am a sort of smorgasbord: Buddha and Machiavelli, Eastern religion and Western cognition, love and death--

Porkpie

Yeah yeah yeah. Sure. Uh huh.

Diane

And the farmer took another load away.

Professor

The profound sounds corny. I take that risk.. I'm a a a a--

Porkpie

I noticed.

Professor

grave clown in a circus of horrors.

Hunter

Asshole in a whatchacallit, c-c-c-c-collection of shitheads.

Professor

Arthur my dark young man of the sonnets (laughs) you, and you alone, do have a native sense of a sort. I am impressed with your logic no less than the Duchess's.

Hunter

Awwwwwww, nothing about me? I'm fuckin crushed.

Porkpie

Well you're tutoring me math, least that's what my mom's paying you for.

(MAC is trying to throw his milkshake onto the hamburger; DIANE holding his wrist.)

Professor

Don't Mac! 'll eat right through the fucker.

Porkpie

We eat, it eats.

Professor

Tutoring me math? You're illiterate: your syntax skewed, your thinking screwed.

Porkpie

Whatever you say. (aside) Changes every minute anyways.

(MAC has hit the hamburger with his milkshake and DIANE is dabbing her blouse with a napkin.)

Cook

Oooooops. Flying milkshakes aint allowed.

(Diane kneels down to wipe the hamburger.)

Professor

(To COOK) Put it on the sign, put it on the sign. How's she supposed to know?

Diane

(to COOK) We're sorry. Its been one of those days. (to MAC) I know you don't like milkshakes, Honey, but they're two for one!

(The foregoing is funny to PORKPIE and he swoops around like an airplane.)

Porkpie

Hoo-hah! Hoo-hah! Hoo-hah!

Professor

What a provincial! In ten years you'll acquire enough polish and taste to admire (pointing) that horrid Fishface sign.

Porkpie

I'd fuck it now just for the splinters.

Professor

In twenty you'll be Mac and the Dutchess melted together in the shape of a boob tube.

In thirty you'll be the hunter creaming his jeans over blasting a mouse with a bazooka.

Diane

Yuk! You're all so disgusting! Yuk! My Mac's the only man here!

Porkpie

Yup, but the professor's got it all figured, that's right. (kicking pebbles onto the hamburger, MAC wincing each time)

Professor

That is right. Just everybody keep watching the beautiful Fishface sign. The odds are that unless there's a chickening out by a certain seemingly super-intense party, why then that there ole fishface is going to become an historical spot. The Pennsylvania Trail of History: William Penn's cock cooler, Ben Franklin's--

Porkpie

The opposite.

Diane

(placating gesticulating MAC again) But we save half!

Professor

You people are surreal! Are you sure you're not alumni of that institution down the road to which I've dedicated my life?

Porkpie

Balls!

Professor

Well the past two months anyway. (shaking fist at MAC)  
Dedicated! You ramrod asshole! Dedicated!

(MAC, with frenchfries sticking out of his mouth, does his best at mocking PROFESSOR'S "dedicated."

Mac

Ded--etc.

(PROF runs at MAC, perhaps over hamburg, and pulls frenchfries from MAC'S mouth, flings them.)

Professor

That's right! Dedicated! (throws their table over) You don't scare me any longer, Iron Mac. People like me are beginning to stand up to people like you. Dedicated, you chamber of commerce

ball squeezer, you numbnuts queen of the ledger page. You can't murder me! Hah! Hah! You don't hold all the cards now, do you? You got too much control and now you fuckin lost it by turning into a gravestone! A barely walking cock.

Diane

You leave us alone. (threatening with her milkshake) Mac is dedicated. He certainly is! Curt let the business go to shit with his yogurt and homelife.

Porkpie

(pulling PROF back by the shirt)

Yeah, well, he's got Adele Davis at least.

Professor

(screaming) Will vitamin C prevent life? Will E stop the turns of the testicle vise?

Porkpie

Ooooooooo, I love it!

(He's getting PROF away, but PROF wrenches arm as if throwing ball at MAC.)

Professor

Mhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

Porkpie

Get back here and sit down you Freak! Won't last out the semester if you keep this crap up.

(WAITER enters to right the table and help clean up, Diane settles MAC.)

Waiter

(to Diane) Don't know why Cookie don't call cops.



Hunter

There'll be some fuckin order here or I'll make the order and that's no shit neither.

Professor

Did you hear a mosquito whisper from the right?

Porkpie

That's enough now.

Professor

Never!

Porkpie

You willllllll get fired.

Professor

So what? What should I stay for? This hell? Look around you! The apotheosis! of kitchy kitchy koo in the birch bark canoe. And there are the tourists. The tourists! Iron Mac and the Dutchess! America's lowlife on the move!

Diane

(re MAC) This is a sick man!

Professor

Then watch the murder! Watch the murder Mac. Buy a replica of the knife--shipped anywhere-with the blood that won't come off. Send one home to little Benny. See the Dutchman take his wife to bed. Vunderful good! Made in Japan! Take a shit in the world's largest ashtray, then hollow it out into a canoe and paddle away into the neon.

Hunter

You aint playing with the full deck, fatty boy.

Professor

I tried but the shit canoe broke apart. And I landed here and tried to bring learning, here I tried to bring art, and music. Here! Here! Here! Here! Here!

Diane

Loony as a tune.

Professor

Here I (almost whispering) tried to light up mean lives! (sobs)

Porkpie

With pot.

Hunter

Aint that the truth?

Professor

(recovering) Why not? Any medicine for despair. Give a joint to Mac, we can get into his tight ass. He'll shake to death with ecstasy!

Hunter

My gun'll go up your ass in a minute and I mean it!

Professor

(lisps.) Violenth!

(PORKPIE starts picking up pebbles, pingping them off hamburger-MAC jumps with each.)

Porkpie

Pop. My...pop--

Professor

Pot indeed! I'm high on culture!

Hunter

Didn't notice.

Professor

When you hear that word you reach for your gun, right?

Hunter

In a minute.

Porkpie

I mean my pop, he don't want me to hang around you no more.

Professor

Shows what he knows. I'm your passport from the Dutch Wonderburger you're hitting with those rocks, world's largest ash tray, fuckin decoupage fuckin coffin fuckin fuckin fuckin fuckin!

Diane

That's just a kit, smartass! You don't know everything.

Professor

(bowing in every direction) I bow to experts. I bow to experts. I bow to experts.

Cook

Cool it down dere or we hafta pay entertainment tax.

Professor

I bow to the hamburger! I embrace the hamburger! (running to it and throwing himself in a bellyflop.) Muh! I love you! I love you! (he pongs off and lies on his back nearby) Ugh. Ugh! Ughhhhhhhhhhh! I tell you this is the bottom of hell and I'm

the devil in ice!

Porkpie

Didn't know devil was so fat.

Diane

That's the best one yet!

Mac

(Bronx cheer)

Professor

Love is shown in many ways. Suck me Hunter for I have slummed.

Hunter

(grabbing rifle) What'd you say?

Porkpie

Nothing. He's gotta sit down. Come on now!

Professor

(flailing arms and legs) Bless me Dutchess, bless me Iron Mac, bless me, Hunter, bless me Vay-torrerrr! For I have shunned!

Hunter

You shit!

Professor

And please please please bless me too Plastic Dutchman, standing up there over our happy valley and blessing us! with your immense glowing pretzel, each fleck of salt as big as a Harley.

Porkpie

That's enough. Show's over.

Professor

(slapping his hands away) Winking blinking gross gross signs!  
American Puke! (retches)

Diane

There's some things you don't do out in public and I don't care  
how educated you are.

Porkpie

You're both oversensitive, you and the prof here.

Professor

(sort of swiveling around to a kneeling position and choking  
himself with both hands until his eyes pop) The wires the  
wires!

Diane

He got us there.

(POLICEMAN enters at Diane AND MAC. He wears helmet with  
upraised black visor.

Policeman

What's this here? (pointing at PROF)

Diane

He he's at the college. (PROF scrambles awkwardly up)

Policeman

Looks like.

Diane

But they're hippies or something.

Policeman

Just that aint breaking the law.

(MAC starts nodding furiously, pounding both fists on the table.)

What's the trouble, Sir?

Professor

Hah! Law and order law and order. Lock up your daughters!

Policeman

(pointing) That'll be enough. (PORKPIE shuffles away.)  
(to Diane) Some identification?

Professor

(profoundly calm) I know. That's enough. Cease and desist. Everybody's always saying...since doctor slapped me on the ass. Synchronize your consciences.(consults watch) But ... last ... laugh's ... due in five.

Diane

My husband's sick and we're on vacation. That's why I went fast. It's a new car. It goes so nice you don't know.

Policeman

Need idents.

Diane

Is it something to do with Olla?

Professor

(screeches) Don't worry about Olla! Yoga'll save her along with the one-named faggot! And her marriage and the fuckin temple of a middle class kitchen! You could eat the floor!

Policeman

Driver's license? Wait a minute--how you spell that?

Diane

Oh! L-I --

Policeman

No no no. Whatsherface's name?

Diane

Olla?

Professor

She's quick is our Diane.

Diane

O-L-L-A! Curt's wife!

Professor

That's Iron Mac's partner, the fatass. Stick around you get the whole history, abortion to zits. Duchess is one of your secretive types.

Policeman

Shhhh! (taking out pad) No this is (puzzles) Yu-loo-lurr or something.

Professor

(sung) If we catch the squealer we'll serve him up for barbeque.

Policeman

(to PROF) Do you know this female?

Professor

Only carnally.

(Light darkens suddenly. All look up--PROF licking his lips, almost hysterical)

Professor

Now the true shit is falling. (It) burns. Just the right atmosphere. Ser-in-dip-i-TOUS! (high-pitched laugh)

Policeman

I told that idiot Turk or Chinaman or whatever the hell he is: stop burning that stuff on weekends. Councils gotta act on this!

Professor

They always send the stereotype. Don't you have officers (who)quote Blake? Yeats?

(Diane crawls under table to get purse; POLICEMAN joins her. She fishes out license and he reads it. MAC holds his nose with both hands, and he rocks.)

Jack Keroac maybe?

Diane

Rotten eggs! Yuk!

Mac

Stink!

Professor

Quick somebody, cover the hamburger. It'll get ruined! Don't worry Mac, it'll only corrode your balls. Don't need em anyway.

(POLICEMAN bangs head getting out from under table and is soon approaching PROF.)

Diane

He thinks he can say anything to anybody. Can't you arrest him for that?

Professor



You ought to have bill of rights shoved up your ass, Duchess.

(POLICEMAN tries to steady PROF to look into his eyes but PROF keeps pushing POLICEMAN'S hands away.)

My body is a temple.

Diane

Hmpf Mac, a Jew.

Policeman

Pretty dilated.

Professor

The light's bad not to say corrupt and I got the virus.

(WAITER enters and goes to HUNTER--there's a short pantomime of misunderstanding as WAITER points to his order pad.)

Is there a charge, officer? What's the charge?

Hunter

Being a hairy jew asshole.

Professor

I plead guilty, innocent, innocent.

Waiter

Kill that Wonderburger! Kill it! Kill iy! Killllllll, Cookie baby!

Cook

Roger, whacko. (He pantomimes cutting throat, shooting self in mouth and ear.)

Diane

Such children!

Policeman

(to HUNTER) You get that rifle locked in trunk of car or something. You think rabbit gonna come through here.

Professor

(hopping) He'd never make it in this air.

(As surly HUNTER is complying, PROF hops into him and knocks him into waiter who screams, since HUNTER has pulled off part of his beard.)

Professor

Fascist pigs god-given rights bear arms! He's Communist Conspiracy, look at red coat! They're gonna seize the hamburger! It's world war three and this is the Hamburger Sarajevo! This is the Hamburger Sarajevo! Quick protect the archduke! Hide him under the hamburger! We'll dig with our hands! If we stop world war 1, the next one will have nowhere to go!

(POLICEMAN seizes him from the rear, makes him sit on the ground near Diane, goes to talk with WAITER.)

Diane

You're as loony as a tune!

Professor

How bout a quickie? Union scale.

Hunter

Jesusssssssss! (can't get steel wool from fingers.  
Red blinkng lights and DIANE picks up binoculars again.)

Diane

All these squad cars but... (takes binoculars down) mishmash! One side shows one thing and the other side the other thing. Cars look cardboard, cops like paper dolls.

Professor

How sweet.

Diane

Hmpf! (while shaking binoculars)

Professor

They got banged around like the rest of us, Dutchess.  
And now your vision is misaligned. I love it I love it!

Porkpie

Nobody's going to bang me!

Diane

Where's he been?

Professor

How quickly they forget.

Diane

I shouldn't talk to you.

Professor

It's okay. He didn't read me my alleged rights.

Diane

Why are you so mean?

Professor

It's the only way I know to show love.

Diane

Well it's sick!

Mac

Sick hate hicks!

(A simultaneous flash and fufffff sound--similar to igniting too much charcoal starter-from the direction of the Fishface sign. Everyone's knocked back a bit.)

Policeman

Oh my God! (running as he gets visor down, fishes out handkerchief to put under visor. Animated PROF follows POLICEMAN; WAITER flings away walkie talkie which shrieks; PORKPIE exits.)

Porkpie

mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm! (frightened hum)

Diane

(hoisting binoculars) I'm closing one eye. Oh fishface sign's on fire, Mac. Laminations popping and spitting all over the place. Pile of blankets under. Hmpf. A...big doll looking like sex. It's a girl! Kinda...sinking down inside herself. (MAC give her a lingering, love-filled look)

Mac

Hot.

Diane

A burning girl. (He's reaching hand to her.)

Mac

Hot.

Diane

Sure is! Feel my hair, Honey. (He does and she takes his hand and puts it between her legs.) Oh youuuuuuuu!

Mac

(sighs)

Diane

Doesn't take much to get you going. Look at the cops! (We hear whoosh of fire extinguisher; then screech of TV crew's brakes.)

Professor

(entering) Late as usual! You blewwwwww it! (takes out sheet of paper, shakes it)

Diane

Let's get out of here, see it Holiday Inn! (drags Mac off)

(HUNTER Xs in front; ostensibly TV crew yells at him and he is flustered and angry.)

Mac

(off) All dull and work play.

Professor (blinking as lights hit him)

Save that footage for the Drooling Cretin Hour, now zoom in on me. (reads) Our sister, Eullula in her pyroconsumation a few moments ago has shown us again--she was dissuaded by me and all the other members or our group--self conceptualized and self perpetuated in contradistinctions to Cambodian incursions and Middle American lies everywhere, the gratuitous killing of Asians and blacks everywhere forced by this totalitarian wealth system with its pseudo-moral constructs. Such callousness of the military filth makers in terrific contrast--  
(A popping noise from the fishface and a laugh off)

Edit that out! --in in in contrast to her revolutionary ideals and those of the Kent State Martyrs.

Physical moral and spiritual starvation in the midst of plenty! Got it? (He slaps hand with paper and there's simultaneous explosion off, puzzling and frightening all.)

(soft laugh) I aint responsible for everything. For nothing really.

END OF ACT 1